



Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority Visitor's Center Update

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Hello all,

Together, we are jointly making this call to action on behalf of the Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) and the Hickory Nut Gorge Chamber (HNGC). During the next 4-8 weeks, the visitor center doors can't open without you. So please, consider what time you can give as a volunteer to the center in the Hickory Nut Gorge this coming May and June.

What makes the next few weeks so critical? We are glad to say we write this email in the spirit of co-operation which permeates -- and is in fact the foundation of -- recent discussions regarding this visitor center.

How did we get here? Over the past year, the TDA and the HNGC individually took a great deal of time to review our respective mission statements, goals and financial capabilities. In doing so, the HNGC has found it would like to have the freedom and flexibility to focus on other initiatives which will come as/if it finds relief from the administrative and considerable cost burdens of operating and staffing a visitor center. Meanwhile, a critical goal the TDA identified is to offer the best possible visitor experience through the Visitor Information Network (VIN). For the TDA, the visitor center in Lake Lure represents the VIN's best possible cornerstone.

Therefore, over the next 4-8 weeks, the Town of Lake Lure (owner of the visitor center building) and the TDA will be hard at work on the details of a new lease between the town and the TDA to operate and renovate the center. The HNGC supports this endeavor, and the TDA recognizes the HNGC has a wealth of information and history, a wealth from which the TDA can draw as it begins its work, especially for the renovations of the center building. In addition, the TDA/Town lease will allow for HNGC/community input for the center via the TDA VIN-Information subcommittee and through public input sessions. We hope the TDA and the Town can formally consider this opportunity at their June meetings. While it may seem like a quick turnaround, it actually leaves us with a 4-8 week gap - and so, the call for action here.

Lake Lure Town Manager Chris Braund said it best when he said, "Community volunteers have been the lifeblood of our visitor center and we expect that this will not change under TDA leadership." The visitor center will always need its volunteers, but never more than it does right now.

So please, contact TDA Administrative Assistant Jackie Wallace at 828-287-6113 and volunteer whatever time you can to help keep the doors of your center open. Thursday-Sunday have the most critical needs - even if you can give just an hour, it will make a difference.

With each of our regards,

Michelle Whitaker

Executive Director

Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority

Rob Young

Marketing and Sales Manager

Chimney Rock Management, LLC

Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park
and President

Hickory Nut Gorge Chamber of Commerce

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TDA Board Members:

A directory of the current TDA Board members can be found by [clicking here](#).